



A

DISCOURSE,

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ON THE

MORAL, LEGAL AND DOMESTIC CONDITION

OF

OUR COLORED POPULATION,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

VERMONT COLONIZATION SOCIETY,

AT

MONTPELIER, OCTOBER 17, 1832.

BY J. K. CONVERSE,

Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Burlington, Vt.

BURLINGTON: EDWARD SMITH.

(Successor to Chauncey Goodrich.)

1832.

REV. J. K. CONVERSE.

As a committee of the Vermont Colonization Society, I am requested to present you their very cordial thanks for your able and interesting discourse delivered last evening, and also to request a copy of the same for publication.

Very respectfully, yours,

C. WRIGHT.

MONTPELIER, Oct. 18th, 1832.

REV. C. WRIGHT.

In reply to your note of this morning, and in compliance with the request of the Colonization Society of Vermont, I send you herewith, a copy of the discourse presented last evening. If the Society think its publication will serve the cause, which it was intended to promote, it is cheerfully committed to their disposal.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. K. CONVERSE.

MONTPELIER, Oct. 18th, 1832.

DISCOURSE.

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.
And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty ;
Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press ;
of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him.
And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee ; therefore I command thee this thing to day. Deut. xv. 12—15.

THESE words contain an injunction from Jehovah to the Jewish nation soon after their emancipation from Egyptian bondage. They were designed to teach them lessons of humanity and kindness towards all men, and especially towards those who might be in a state of servitude or subordination among themselves.

When the great Lawgiver of the Jews under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was preparing his code for the government of the people, he gave to it one very remarkable feature, which provided that, at the end of every seven years, the debtor, the servant and all the oppressed should be set at liberty and allowed to go out free among their brethren. On the year of release, or at the season of the great national jubilee, the command in reference to all persons of this description was, *Thou shalt let the oppressed go free* : and obedience to this command was enforced by one of the most striking and powerful of all arguments in the closing words of our text : *For thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed thee*. This was a direct and powerful appeal to their own feelings,—to their vivid recollection of their own recent sufferings under a most rigorous bondage. The Hebrews were to exercise compassion towards those

who had been oppressed among them, not only because this was right in itself, but especially because God had exercised compassion towards them when in bondage and had delivered them out of it.

According to the Jewish law, if a man for debt or crime or any other cause, were sold into bondage, he could not be retained in this condition more than six years. On the seventh year at the longest he could claim his freedom. And if the year of jubilee or of release occurred before the end of six years' service, on that year he was to receive his free discharge. And let it be especially observed that the servant or bondman thus set free, was not to be sent away empty.—The injunction in the text was designed to prevent this. *And if thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty : Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine press ; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed thee.*

Again, in verses seventh and ninth of this chapter, this injunction is repeated in reference to all poor persons. *If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother : But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,*

and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou give him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

Thus, the law not only required the Hebrews to emancipate those who were in bondage at an appointed time : It also required them to furnish their emancipated servants with the means of beginning in the world for themselves. They were rightly supposed to have nothing of their own. They had received no wages for their service, and they must still be slaves or servants in every thing but the name, unless they were furnished from some source, with the means of getting into a condition in which they might be really free.

Every one must see that the words which we have chosen as an appropriate introduction to the subject now before us, apply with peculiar force to the people of this land and to the circumstances of the age and country in which we live. Many of our ancestors were once oppressed in the land of their birth for the truth's sake, but God delivered them out of all their troubles and brought them to this Canaan of liberty and plenty and distinguished christian privileges.

Again, at a subsequent period, our fathers were *oppressed* and threatened with an 'Egyptian bondage,' and again, the Lord redeemed them, and brought them out 'with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.'

All who now hear me have been in bondage in the service of sin and satan ; but there are some, and I hope many, here, whom the Lord our God hath redeemed and brought into *the glorious liberty of the sons of God*. May we not, then, ought we not to bring to the consideration of the subject now before us, the solemn recollection, that both we and our fathers have been bondmen in several important respects ; may we not

also bring those grateful feelings which ought to be awakened by the assurance that the Lord our God has redeemed us from our bondage.

So pertinent are the words of our text to our circumstances as a people, that they seem to have been uttered with prophetic view to the age and country in which we live. We as a christian nation, like the Jews of old, profess to receive Jehovah as our sovereign, and his law as our rule of action. Like the Jews, we hold many of our poor brethren in a state of servitude and degradation. More than 2,000,000 are in this condition. They have been in this condition not merely seven years, but more than twice seven times seven years. The season of our nation's jubilee has just passed away. The outward demonstrations of gratitude and joy with which it was hailed, through every part of the land, have scarcely died upon the ear. To us then, on this occasion, the injunction of the text comes, clothed by the Spirit of God, in all its original authority. *Let the oppressed go free, Isa. 58. 6. For Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed thee.*

The plans and proceedings of the American Colonization Society, whose cause we plead this evening, are all based upon the assumed fact, that we have among us a numerous population, who are not only deprived of personal liberty, but are sunk extremely low in ignorance and moral degradation ; and who, though they might be made freemen in name, can never be raised to the rank and privileges of freemen in this country.

I do not intend on this occasion to enter into a discussion of the abstract right or injustice of slavery. On this point, among us, there is probably but one opinion.—Taking the system of slavery and our colored

population just as we find them, it will be my object to show that the plan of colonization, is the best plan for improving the condition of our colored people, and for freeing our country from the evils and dangers of a mixed population. And that the strong motives to effort in this cause, may be seen and felt in all their force, we shall take a general view of the moral, legal and domestic condition of our colored population. The most lamentable effect of the system of slavery as it exists in this country, is the woful degradation of one sixth part of our population, or of more than 2,000,000 of human beings. Most of them are in bondage. They are connected by no natural tie, either to the soil on which they live, or with any other class of our population.

I. *I am to speak first of their moral condition.* And my first remark here is, that the great majority of our colored people are sunk as low in ignorance and vice as we can conceive it possible for human beings to be, in the midst of civilization and christian institutions. This fact is undeniable in respect to a large portion of them. They are as emphatically heathens as any that can be found on the continent of Asia.—This may seem a strong assertion; and you are ready to ask, why is the African race among us sunk so low in the scale of being?—To this question there is an easy and ready answer. An obvious reason for the moral degradation of our colored population is, that they are placed, both by our laws and by public sentiment, totally beyond the reach of those great moral motives and stimulants which form the characters of white men and raise them to their respective grades of moral and intellectual dignity. What are the motives which form the characters of white men? They are plainly such as these; aspirations after wealth, ease, power, reputation, a share

in the common honors and privileges of society and future happiness. These are the objects which all really freemen place before them in idea, and for the attainment of which they do instinctively apply all their powers. But not one of these motives, (except the last) can be made effectually to reach and touch the springs of action in the slave, for the plain reason, that he can never hope to attain one of these objects, however much he may desire it. The slave, for example, cannot expect wealth, because he labors, not for himself, but for another. The master treats him on the principle that when he is well fed and clothed he can want nothing more. This principle may apply very well to beasts of burden. But can you bring human nature down to this? no, never; you cannot bring the slave to this. He does desire more, and more he will have; and acting on the instinctive principle that every man is justly entitled to the product of his own limbs and labor, and regarding what his master claims as property, as the product of his limbs and labor, he therefore steals it. And as the property of all the masters in a given district is the product of all the slaves in that district, therefore all slaves have a right to steal from all masters. This mode of reasoning and practice, though all wrong, is perfectly natural to them in their condition. Hence it happens, that where no religious restraint interferes, to be a slave and to be a thief is much the same thing. And human nature under any other complexion, would exhibit the same features.

Again. The colored man can have no moral motives in the hope of acquiring power, for whether he is a bondman or nominal freeman he knows very well that the exercise of his power can never rise higher than to a very little influence over his companions in degradation.

Again. The colored man, in this country, can derive no moral stimulants from the hope of gaining a reputation or establishing for himself a character, for he knows perfectly well, that the learning of a Plato, the piety of an Apostle and the refined manners of a Courtier, can never raise him to a level with the white man, or procure for him a place in the social privileges and public honors of his country. His exclusion from these depends not at all upon his talents, or his literary or moral qualities. It depends wholly upon the fact, that he is a colored man, a misfortune, alas, totally beyond the power of his control.—Such is the condition of every bondman. Those nominally free among us, are scarcely in a better condition. With all the cares, burdens and responsibilities of freemen they have none of its substantial benefits. All prospect of amalgamation with the whites is forever cut off. Their associations are, and, in our southern country must be, chiefly with slaves. They can have no political influence in our public counsels. The bar, the bench and the medical profession will forever be closed to them here by an impassable barrier.

I ask then, since things are thus, how it can be otherwise, than that the colored race among us should be sunk to the lowest depths of civilized ignorance and vice? Every principle of enterprise that can have an influence in elevating the character of a man, is swept away from them. They feel that they are devoted to worthlessness and ignorance. They bid farewell to hope. Their grand principle of action is, ‘let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’ They freely give up to every unholy passion and lust, and thus furnish, in their debasement, a living commentary on the declaration of the prophet that *the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.*

There is, then, as we have seen, no moral motive that can be made effectually to touch the springs of intellectual and moral action in our colored population, except that which is drawn from religion; a motive, which assures them that they will be rewarded or punished in a future life according to the character they form here. And now, we ask, what has been done to bring them under the influence of this motive? Or, in other words, to instruct them in the principles and duties of the christian religion? Truth must answer, almost nothing, has been done.—The laws of the south strictly forbid their being taught to read; and they make no provision for their being orally instructed. Ministers sometimes preach to them, under peculiar and severe restrictions of the law. But with all that has yet been done, the majority are emphatically heathens, and, what is very strange, heathens in the midst of a land of sabbaths and of churches, of bibles and of christians. Yes, through some strange defect of public sentiment, we, as a visible church and a christian nation, have looked on year after year;—we have seen from one to two millions of immortal beings, of the same nature with ourselves, endued with the same powers of mind, and with as quick sensibilities of heart, destined to the same judgment bar; to be undistinguished sharers with us in the same eternity, abandoned to palpable ignorance and fanaticism, with 30,000 of them yearly passing into eternity, without any hearty efforts or systematic plans for instructing them in the religion of Jesus Christ. For such neglect, there must be guilt somewhere.

I would not be understood to say that the slaves of the south never have the opportunity of hearing the gospel, or that all pious masters neglect their religious instruction, for such would not be the truth. The slaves sometimes

have the opportunity of hearing the gospel, but they have no disposition to improve it. They have no respect for the sabbath: As they are confined to hard labor during six days of the week, they claim the *right* to spend the sabbath as they please: Accordingly, they usually do spend it in visiting, hunting, in riot and drunkenness, in carrying to market their stolen property or the little produce which they have honestly cultivated around their mud-walled cabins.

Pious masters, (with some honorable exceptions) are criminally negligent of giving religious instruction to their slaves. It has long been neglected and masters have fallen into a deep sleep in reference to this matter. They can and do instruct their own children and perhaps their 'house servants'; while those called '*field hands*', live, and labor and die, without being once told by their pious masters that Jesus Christ died to save sinners. Indeed this is a most ungrateful task to the master. He is so much accustomed to speak to them in the rough tone of sternness and authority, that it requires an effort most revolting to his feelings, to assume the kind and gentle accents of a christian teacher.

Intemperance and theft are vices to which the colored population of the south are very much addicted; so much so, that it is proverbially said that they are constitutionally inclined to these vices. But the undoubted fact is, that they are no more predisposed to them constitutionally, than white men would be in the same circumstances.

Finally, in respect to the moral condition of slaves, it should be remembered, that there are no laws regulating marriage among them. An apology for a marriage ceremony is sometimes attempted among the higher order of 'house servants';—is celebrated, perhaps, by a minister of the gospel or a civil magistrate; but even

then, it has no legal validity, and may continue only so long as shall suit the caprice of the parties or the convenience of the master. The law, in this, as in other things, respects them only as *property*. The effects of such a state of things, on their moral character, need not be described to this assembly.

I have thus far spoken chiefly, of the southern slave, but the moral condition of the great body of the free colored people, throughout the union, is but little better. They, too, are placed, by their color and by public sentiment, totally beyond the reach of those great moral motives which form the characters of other men; and for proof of their general degradation, I need only state the fact from the reports of the American Prison Discipline Society, that the penitentiaries of some of our free states, contain seven blacks to one white man, when the ratio of the two kinds of population is considered.—In Mass. only 1-74th part of the population is colored, but 1-6th part of the convicts are colored. Here then, we have one sixth part of the crimes and convicts out of 1-74th part of the population. In Connecticut, 1-34th part of the population is colored and 1-3d part of the convicts. In New York, 1-35th part of the population is colored but 1-4th part of all the crime and convicts is from this 35th portion of the population. The proportion in Pennsylvania is the same.—In New Jersey, 1-13th part of the population is colored and one third part of the convicts. According to this calculation, the colored population of our free states is seven fold more degraded than the whites. In Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, one fourth part of the money expended for the support of convicts and paupers, is expended on colored convicts and paupers.—These remarks and statistics are still more

applicable to the free blacks in the slave holding states. They are there placed midway between freedom and slavery. They feel neither the incentives and stimulants of the one, nor the wholesome restraints of the other ; and they are alike injurious by their conduct to every other class of society. They are not only sunk to the common level of the slave in moral degradation, but are often, far below him in poverty and wretchedness.—Though nominally freemen, they are in fact slaves,—slaves in public sentiment, and slaves to every vice that debases human nature ; for, what is freedom without the emancipation of the intellect. What is freedom, without the possible opportunity of developing and bringing into action those powers which a benevolent God has conferred upon us. It is a vanishing vapor ! It is a name without a meaning.—So much for the *moral* condition of our colored population.

II. *The legal condition of our colored population.*
It is known to some present, that the African race, who are in bondage among us, are not governed by the same laws with the whites, but by a totally distinct code. Many of the laws instituted for slaves, would appear rigorous and cruel in the extreme, to those unacquainted with the circumstances which called them forth. In Virginia, where the laws are as mild and those in bondage are as well treated as in any state in the union, the standard of capital punishment for the white man, is one thing, but that for the slave is quite a different thing.—No slave is sent to the penitentiary for any crime whatever ; and for the obvious reason, that if slaves were sent there for the same crimes with white men, acres of land and millions of dollars would scarcely furnish an establishment large enough to contain and support the multitudes that would flow into it.—Most

of the crimes punishable in white men by *penitentiary* or *fine*, when committed by slaves, are punished with *death*. Thus, stealing or being accessory to the stealing of a horse, by the white man, is punishable by imprisonment or fine, the same crime by a slave, death. So the burning of outbuildings by a white man; imprisonment or fine, by a slave, death. So of a hundred other crimes, such as the breaking open a warehouse or store; forgery of various kinds, the embezzling of public property or documents, subject the slave to death; others, only to fine or imprisonment.

Again, the deep moral degradation of the slaves is acknowledged and proclaimed to the world, by a law which declares that no testimony of a slave, or of any number of slaves, can be received in a court of justice or before a magistrate, against a white citizen. An army of slaves cannot convict a white man of a capital crime committed before the eyes of them all; though one, or two white men could convict an army of slaves of the same crime under like circumstances.

Again, in most of the slave holding states, the laws strictly forbid masters to emancipate their slaves unless they remove them out of the limits of the state. And all servants thus emancipated, if found within the state twelve months after emancipation, may be taken up by any sheriff and sold again into hopeless bondage, unless they have obtained *citizenship*, in the mean time, by application to the legislature. These laws, rigorous and unrighteous as they may seem, were like, others already named, dictated by stern necessity. The southern states were driven to these measures in order to prevent the accumulation of an evil, already paralyzing their physical and moral energies and threatening them with destruction. And even now, under the rigorous

execution of these enactments, their free colored population is increasing four per. cent. faster than the whites. But there is one feature of these measures which cannot be defended from the charge of inhumanity and oppression. If these states are determined to drive these unhappy beings from their borders, after being enriched by their sweat and toil, they are bound by all that is honorable and sacred, to provide for them an assylum, or furnish them with the means of getting to one, already provided. Even the criminals of Great Britain, when compelled by sentence of the judge to leave their country, are treated with more humanity. They are taken up and transported at the public expense and in the public vessels, a distance of nearly 10,000 miles, to the continent of New Holland.

I will notice one more of the slave laws of the south, and let that suffice to illustrate the legal condition of our colored population. I allude to the enactment which forbids the teaching of colored persons to read or write. In five of these United States, the first article of whose political creed is, that 'all men are born free and equal;' not only slaves, but all colored persons, however good their character, are forbidden, under heavy penalty, to be taught to read or write. This surely is a measure which can not be defended from the imputation of cruelty! To hold the body in perpetual and hopeless bondage is hard enough! but to bind the soul—the immortal spirit—created in God's own image, which Christ died to redeem;—to bind this, in chains of ignorance and eternal darkness, is indeed cruel! and the maintaining in our country a system which demands such an expedient as a measure of safety, imposes a tremendous responsibility somewhere.

"Wo for those who trample o'er a mind!
 A deathless thing.—They know not what they do
 Or what they deal with? Man perchance may bind
 The Flower his steps have bruised; or light anew
 The torch he quenches, or to music wind
 Again the lyre-string, from his touch that flew.
 But for the soul! O tremble and beware
 To lay rude hands upon God's mysteries there.

The object of these enactments is to keep the colored race ignorant of their condition that they may be retained the more quietly in bondage. But the plan for this object is utterly vain. As well might they attempt to build up walls to the heavens, to shut out the light of the sun. No precaution can cause the slave to forget that he is a slave. No ignorance, however abject, can eradicate from his bosom the indelible stamp of nature, whereby she has decreed man free. No rigors of legislation can suppress the deep and earnest yearnings of his heart after freedom.

Such are a few specimens of the laws for the government of the colored race. I have not alluded to them for the purpose of awakening a feeling of reproach towards our sister states of the south. God forbid that I should do this. Those unfortunate states deserve not your reproach; much more do they deserve your sympathies, your prayers and tears. For many are the christians and patriots there, who are at this moment mourning over the circumstances which make such rigorous measures necessary for the safety of themselves and families. The very existence of such laws, is a demonstration of the proposition with which we commenced these remarks, viz. that the slaves of the south are sunk as low in ignorance and moral degradation as it is possible for human beings to be, in the midst of a civilized and christian nation. And this is upon the very obvious principle, that the severity of law must be in proportion to the tendency to resist; i. e. in proportion to the

degradation and vices of those over whom the law is instituted. Hence, if the rigors of the slave laws of the slave holding states, be ten-fold greater than those of the common law, it only proves the fact that the slaves are ten-fold more degraded than the rest of the population.

III. *Their domestic condition.* Did time permit, it might be interesting to you, to describe the domestic habits, manners, usages, and superstitions of the southern slaves. We might speak of the habits and treatment of those born slaves, in their infancy and childhood,—of the kind and quantity of food and the mode of ‘giving it out’ to them ;—of their allotted tasks and treatment in the field under the direction of overseers ; their treatment when sick ; their African customs still retained and transmitted among them ; of their festivals and holidays, funerals &c. Did we wish to move your feelings, we might speak of their coarse and often scanty fare, of their unremitted and unrewarded toil, of their stripes at which mercy weeps, of their crowded bazaars of mud and misery, of the frequent sundering of families, of the unattended sick bed, and the unwept grave.—The rules of management adopted by masters are various, in different sections of the south and even in the same districts of country. In several of the respects here referred to, the treatment of slaves is much better than is generally supposed by our brethren of the north. Yet there is every where seen enough of wrong and outrage, of misery, degradation and cruelty, to call forth from the bosom of the beholder the confession of the poet.

“There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart ;
It does not feel for man ; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
Man finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colored like his own ; and having power

To enforce the wrong for such a worthy cause,
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.”

* * * * *

“And worse than all and most to be deplored
As human nature’s broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him and exacts his sweat
With stripes that mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man?—and what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head, to think himself a man.
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
No; dear as freedom is, and in my heart’s
Just estimation, prized above all price;
I had much rather be myself the slave
And wear the bonds than fasten them on him.”

Such is the moral, legal and domestic condition of one sixth part of our population; degraded, abandoned to heathenism in a christian country; doomed, under the form of law, to the grossest ignorance that ever darkened the human mind, and oppressed with a bondage more rigorous and hopeless than ever attended slavery in any other form. Interested men may disguise the fact, but slavery, though disguised, is slavery still. Degraded they must be in this condition: For ‘the day that deprives man of his liberty, robs him of one half his manly virtue.’

The condition of our free colored people is in fact but very little better. Of these, we have in the United States more than 300,000 whom *we* call freemen, whom the *law* calls freemen, but whom we treat as aliens. We treat them as citizens in nothing. We place no dependence on them for the defence of the country. They cannot be elected to civil offices of any kind. They cannot hold charters and privileges as a public body. And there are a hundred other privileges and immunities, common to white citizens, from which they are excluded by law. They

must be forever shut out from the bar, the bench and the medical profession, by the inexorable force of prejudice. All hope of amalgamation with the rest of the community is cut off by the same reason. In this respect, their situation is peculiar. Among the Greeks and Romans, their slaves were of the same color with themselves, and, on being emancipated, might, in one or two generations, amalgamate with the rest of the community. Against such a result in this country there is an insuperable barrier.—The scheme of colonization is the only one which can deliver our colored population from their degradation and misery, and place them where they can be really free and happy.

Such are the evils growing out of African slavery, to the *colored people themselves*; evils, which the plan of colonization proposes to remove. But there are other evils growing out of this system which are sorely felt by *the United States*.

Of these, in the second part of this discourse, I propose to take a brief review. And

1. Slavery is now acknowledged by our ablest politicians to be a heavy curse to the whole country; and especially so to the south. It is ruinous to the whites; it retards improvement; roots out an industrious population; banishes the yeomanry of the country; destroys all incentives to enterprise, and is followed by many decidedly immoral influences.—Independent of its dangers, it is now, in the south, the greatest obstacle to the advancement of society. The prosperity and advancement of a state must ever be estimated by its increase of inhabitants, industry and wealth. Guided by this standard, we see at once that the largest and oldest of the slave holding states are already left far in the rear of their younger sisters.

Take the State of Virginia for an example. The valuation of the lands in the State of New York, now exceeds the value of all the lands together with all the slaves in Virginia, the largest and oldest state in the union. Virginia is scarcely increasing her inhabitants at all. Of the vast tide of emigration, which is yearly rolling like a flood to the west, scarcely a trickling rill finds its way into the 'Old Dominion.' Of the multitudes of foreigners daily seeking a home in this empire of liberty, how many turn their steps towards this region of the slave? Not one! There is a malaria in the atmosphere of a dense colored population, which they shun as they would the cholera or the deadly atmosphere of the Upas tree. It is a truth, that some of the fairest portions of that once illustrious state, are going to ruin, and slavery is acknowledged to be the cause. The traveller is often astonished at the wide spreading desolation which he meets with there;—the deserted villages and mansions; immense fields left without culture, extensive forests, which if cleared and cultivated by voluntary industry, would support millions;—forests to which the wolf, that was driven back by the approach of man, at the first settlement of the state, is now actually returning, after the lapse of a hundred years, to howl over the desolations of slavery.*

2. The dangers arising from the rapid increase of a *caste* in our nation are not to be overlooked. These dangers are yearly augmenting by the natural horror of slavery and the strong feeling of hostility to the whites, which

* If the picture of the desolations of slavery here drawn, should be thought by any to be exaggerated, it is but justice to remark that the figure of the returning wolf is not a mere imagination of the author of the discourse. He recollects having seen the fact asserted, or an expression to the same effect, in the speech of a southern gentleman before the American Colonization Society at Washington. The quotation is made from memory, and the author of this discourse is unable to decide whether he is indebted for it, to George W. Custis Esq. of Washington, or to the Hon. Mr Mercer of Virginia.

exist in the breasts of the slaves ; by the discussions in our public journals, and by the inflammatory publications which are clandestinely spread, in spite of all efforts to suppress them. The tragic scenes of St Domingo and the more recent horrors of the Southampton massacre, have opened the eyes of the nation. These dangers are fearfully felt in those states where the blacks are the majority and have the physical strength, as is the case in South Carolina, Louisiana and eastern Virginia. What a state of society is that to dwell in where the master, as he rises in the morning to open his doors for admitting his domestics, finds it necessary to go armed with a pistol, not knowing whether he is to meet a friend or deadly enemy in the person of his servant? Yet such is the feeling when dark rumors and suspicions of insurrection are abroad. There is a trembling apprehension which agitates the bosoms of our southern brethren and tells them that they are not safe in their own homes. Some may shut their eyes against the light and cry peace and safety, but the ghosts of the Southampton tragedy will rise up in long array before them and tell them there is danger.—These dangers are felt and deeply felt by the stoutest hearts.—During the recent massacre in Virginia, it was the fortune of the speaker (if he may be permitted to allude to a private incident) to be near the scene of action, in a neighboring city of 14,000 inhabitants, nearly one half of which were blacks. It was rumored that on a certain night the scenes acted in Southampton were to be attempted in that city. Many thought the rumor was groundless : But still such was its power over the fears of the people, that the Governor of the state assembled his council, called out and armed a regiment of 1000 men, to protect the city against what might happen on that anxiously expected night. And not-

withstanding even this precaution, *that* was a night of gloom and terror to many hearts—to many widowed and defenceless families. Many were the eyes on *that* and several successive nights, forsaken of their wonted slumbers. Every sound that fell upon the ear seemed to be the harbinger of death. At the distant barking of the dog ; at the sound of a human accent in the street, or of a footstep upon the pavement, or of the rustling of a leaf upon the window, the fond mother pressed her babe more closely to her bosom, not knowing but it would be the last embrace this side of eternity ! And this was the feeling which prevailed not for a day or a week, but for months. This is the feeling which is every year awakened by floating rumors of conspiracy and *massacre*.

The dangers from this source are accumulating. In South Carolina, while the whites have scarcely doubled their numbers during the last forty years, the blacks have nearly trebled theirs. In the five original slave states, (Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia,) the whites, in forty years, have increased only eighty per. cent. while the slaves have increased 112 per. cent.—According to calculations made by a late secretary of state, the blacks among us double their number in about twenty five years ; the whites only once in twenty eight years.—In twenty five years the slaves will be four millions ; in fifty years eight millions, in one hundred years thirty two millions. And what will this fair republic be worth with thirty millions of aliens and enemies in her bosom ? Colonization will then be out of the question ! As well may you think to move the world ! And will these thirty millions, gathered as they then will be in the south, still submit in quietness to the yoke of bondage ? Let St Domingo answer. Let the more recent horrors of Southampton

answer! Let the *page* of history answer! No; it is impossible. They will be free: And if they are not freed before by christian kindness, they will rise in the consciousness of their might, and shake the yoke from their necks as the lion shakes the dew-drop from his mane; they will wrest the rod from the master's grasp, and the children of this generation may yet walk in chains amidst the sepulchres of their fathers! Here then is the evil with its fast accumulating dangers. It is already so appalling in its aspect that very few dare to look it in the face. But is it wise to hug a serpent in our bosoms until we begin to feel the piercing of its fangs? This evil is now in our power. And shall it not be removed?

Such are some of the evils, the degradation, the cruelties, dangers and blighting political influences arising from the introduction of a colored population into the United States.—For these evils, the plan of colonization offers an effectual remedy. The objects which the Colonization Society aims to accomplish, are,

First. To rescue the free colored population of this country, from the degradation and proscription to which they are here exposed, and place them where they can be free and happy, under the influence of the great moral motives which form the characters of other men.

Secondly. To free this country from the unnumbered evils of a colored population, and thus avert the danger of a dreadful collision between two *castes* which must inevitably be objects of mutual jealousy to each other.

Thirdly. To spread civilization and christianity through the 100,000,000 who now people the continent of Africa.

And fourthly. To put a stop to the nefarious traffic of the slave trade. That it is competent to the accomplishment of these great objects, under the blessing

of God, is proved by the success of its infant efforts. The scheme of the American Colonization Society, is a noble conception. It is a stupendous plan, encircling in its wide embrace, a nation of degraded men, and a continent of heathen. It aims not merely at benefiting this country and the colored population of this country. In addition to this, it is a **FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**. It is such to the churches of this land ; it is such in its effects on Africa. It is in this light that the christian ought to contemplate and patronize it. Every emigrant of good moral character, which the Society sends to Liberia, is a missionary. He carries with him credentials in the sacred cause of liberty and free institutions, and exerts a redeeming influence on all with whom he comes in contact. If he be truly pious, he goes forth as a missionary possessing advantages for evangelizing the native tribes which no white missionary can possess. He teaches by example as well as by precept. Similarity of color and original cast of character, gives him a ready access and a powerful influence over the native tribes. The reason of the little success of many of our efforts to evangelize heathens, is doubtless, that we have attempted to christianize before civilizing them. This work has been forced and unnatural, and has proved abortive in many cases, as among the aborigines of this country. But in Africa, we pursue the natural order of things. Our emigrants and agents go forth with the bible in one hand and the plough in the other. Both parts of the work move on together. Our little colony there, though planted only ten years ago, and still in its infancy, has already commenced the work as a band of foreign missionaries. And for proof of this, look at its present condition.—It now consists of about 3000 souls, 2000 of which were sent from this country ; the other

thousand are re-captured Africans. These 3000 citizens occupy the extensive, healthful and fertile territory of Liberia, on the western coast of Africa, and constitute an independent, republican and christian nation, in that benighted land. They are settled chiefly in the three villages of Monrovia, Caldwell and Millsburg. They have three churches. The ordinances of religion are regularly observed, and its precepts as well obeyed as among ourselves. Sabbath schools are established and well attended. Six permanent common schools, besides some smaller ones, are in successful operation. Nearly 100 children from the native tribes are now training in these schools, who will soon go forth to their respective homes and scatter the light of civilization, religion and free institutions wherever they go. Several of the native tribes have repeatedly expressed their desire to receive religious instruction from the colonists. One of these has a population of 125,000. Three tribes, with their kings, have put themselves under the protection of the colony, and several others have desired the same privilege. 'They wish,' they say, 'to become Americans.'—A news paper, ably conducted by a colored man, a graduate at one of our colleges, has been established; and we see in its various notices of elections, public roads, military force, commercial transactions &c., all the marks of a well established and prosperous little state. All this has been accomplished since 1822, amidst much prejudice and opposition at home, and many obstacles abroad, which must ever be met in settling a new colony. We can already see the lessons of wisdom, liberty, religion and social order, speaking out to the pagans of Africa, in the actions of 3000 living men: And we can well conceive how, in a short time, ignorance, superstition and civil darkness will flee away

from a land into which the knowledge and practice of such institutions shall be transplanted. Now, if such be the progress and such the good influence of this little state while in its infancy, on the surrounding tribes, what may we not expect from its vigorous manhood? The colony live under a free government of their own. Their laws originate with themselves and rise naturally out of their circumstances. Some of their late enactments show that they understand the true principles of legislation. They have adopted the sound policy of taxing heavily the vices of the community for the support of its virtues. For a license to sell ardent spirits, \$300 is exacted by the Liberian code, and the money thus raised goes into their common school fund.—Our naval officers bear the most ample testimony to the good order, good habits and morals of the colony. The colonists themselves, in a recent address to the free colored people of the United States, hold the following language. ‘Our soil is not exceeded for fertility or productiveness by any soil in the world. The productions of the soil go on through the year without intermission. We have no dreary winter here for one half of the year to consume the productions of the other half. Nature is constantly renovating herself and pouring her treasures all the year round into the lap of the industrious.—Our houses and circumstances are perfectly comfortable.—‘The climate of Africa,’ say they, ‘is not understood in other countries. Its inhabitants are as robust, as healthy and as long lived, to say the least, as those of any other country; and for the last four years not one person in fifty from the middle and southern states has died from the change of climate.’—The climate of Africa is decidedly salubrious and healthy to all native Africans, and the children of our colonists, it should be remembered, will all be *natives*.

The successes and unparalleled prosperity of the colony at Liberia, have forever silenced all opposers to the scheme of colonization, and fully demonstrated its practicability. The principal obstacle now in the way, is found in the fact that it will not do to increase the numerical and physical strength of the settlement faster than we do its intelligence and moral power. If thousands of new emigrants without education, without religious principles, and without those habits which are the result of voluntary industry, should be at once united to the establishment, it might become ungovernable. This obstacle to our plan may be successfully avoided by multiplying the establishments. As soon as the means can be furnished, colonies may be planted at a hundred different stations, from each of which we may expect the same results as have already flowed from that of Liberia. Thus, in four or five years time, the capacity of the scheme will be sufficiently increased to receive yearly the whole annual increase of our colored population. This is estimated at 60,000. The cost of transportation is \$25 for each emigrant. The expense of transporting the whole annual increase would be \$1,500,000. This appears to be a great sum; but it is really small when compared with the good to be produced by it. It is less than 12½ cents to each citizen of the United States.—The amount annually expended in the New England States for ardent spirits, which does nobody any good, but spreads disease and death, bankruptcy and ruin, for both worlds, is more than sufficient to remove the whole annual increase of our colored population.—We have, in the United States 2,000,000 of slaves. Estimating their present value at \$150 each, they are worth 120 millions of dollars. The whole expense of their freedom and removal to Africa would be 170 millions.—The amount

expended in this country for ardent spirits (being \$30,000,000, annually) would, in six years time, unclench the fetters of every slave in the land, and comfortably settle him in the land of his fathers.

The expense of our plan is no longer an objection. A tenth part of our surplus revenue would accomplish the whole object.—It is estimated that 80,000 slaves were torn from their home and country and brought into the two ports of Havanna, and Rio de Janeiro, in 1828. If the wretches engaged in the nefarious slave trade, could find means to transport 80,000 human beings across the atlantic, in a year; surely this powerful nation, to rescue itself from the stain of slavery, and for spreading the unfettered enjoyment of liberty, religion and human happiness over the two great continents of America and Africa, can accomplish the conveyance of 60,000, or even 100,000, to a land where they will be lords of the soil. The immediate object of the American Colonization Society, is to do good to the free colored people of this country. It offers to remove to the land of their fathers all who are willing to go. No one is required to go against his will. There are always enough ready to embrace the privilege. At this moment, there are more than 3000, who have taken a Pisgah view of this promised land, and are anxiously waiting for the means to help them across the Atlantic.—Will you help them to go to this land of promise?

But we solicit your patronage for the plan of African Colonization as a powerful auxiliary in the cause of foreign missions. The American Colonization Society, though instituted primarily for another purpose, is, by its natural operation, a foreign Missionary Society. It is such to the churches of this country. It is such to Africa. And is it not needed for this purpose? Let

us look at facts and let them answer. The American churches, since 1810, have expended a million and a half of dollars, in establishing missions on the continent of Asia and the islands of the sea. But they have not planted a single *permanent* mission on the African continent. It is well known that all our missionary operations have been directed to Asia and the Polynesian Islands. All eyes have been turned to these corners of the earth and waiting for the salvation of the Lord. And may that salvation come : yea, let it speedily and abundantly come.—But still we ask, why have the 100 millions of poor benighted Africans been entirely overlooked in distributing the alms of our American churches ? Is it because their souls are not as precious ? Is it because they are not as needy ? Must we not meet them also before the bar of God, as well as the Bramin, the Indian, or the Laplander ? Is it because we owe to Africa, no debt of gratitude, no return of sympathy ; after we, as a nation, and a christian nation too, have borne so large a part in tearing away, and brutalizing her children, and are now holding two millions of them in hopeless bondage ?—Surely, if there is a land on earth, that has claims on our prayers and charities, that land is Africa ! For us as a nation, her country has been made desolate, her fields laid waste, her villages plundered and burnt ; and her children torn away, brutalized, and doomed to pitiless bondage.—If there is a single enterprise of this age, combining all the motives that can move the heart of a man and a christian, it is this which looks to the redemption of Africa, and the well being of the poor African. Justice and mercy, obligation and interest, the voice of humanity within us, and the voice of eternal justice from the heavens, the groans and tears of 2,000,000 of enslaved

men in our own land, and the claims of 100 millions in Africa, for whom Christ died; all speak to us in a language which cannot be disregarded without guilt. To us then as christians, the appeal comes home; are we not called upon to aid in this cause of light, and liberty, and human happiness?

Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high;
Shall we to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny?

When, O when will christian charity awake to the full importance of this subject? Let American christians and American citizens, discharge the debt they owe her; and soon shall we see Africa, 'long distressed and afflicted Africa; delivered from her miseries, her chains knocked off, her spirit emancipated, rising up in strength and beauty, like a new born angel from the night of chaos,' stretching out her hands to God in praise, and invoking ceaseless blessings upon America, as the means and instrument of her redemption.

Bear this subject with you to the throne of grace. Let it occupy your thoughts in the intervals of business. When you sit down in the family circle, among those with whom you mingle in the sweet communion of life, to share the blessings of freedom and plenty, which a bountiful God has bestowed upon you, think of two millions of human beings, in these free, United States, who are cut off from all these blessings. And in the disposition of your property, let not the claims of Africa be forgotten. Remember that in patronizing the cause we plead to night, you are aiding to rescue our free colored population, from degradation and proscription;—to remove the dangers of a dreadful collision between two castes, which may, at a future day, bathe the fairest portion of our land in blood;—you are aiding to arrest

the nefarious traffic of the slave trade, which is still carried on, except on the Liberian coast; and last, though not least, you are aiding to spread civilization and religion over one of the largest and most fertile continents of the globe. These, under the blessing of God, are the promised, the assured, and not very distant results of the scheme of colonization. Yes, it will achieve the intellectual and moral emancipation of Africa, through the instrumentality of our emigrants and colonies. Our own happy country, but two centuries ago, was as wild and savage as Ethiopia now is. It has now become an independent, happy, christian nation. It has grown to its present prosperity and power, from christian colonies like those we are now planting on the shores of Africa. Our anticipations are not too large. The vision is before us and it is sure. Yes, it is sure: The promise of the Omnipotent secures it. *Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*

It is indeed refreshing to the soul to look down the vale of years to come, and enjoy in anticipation, the results of the efforts which this century will make for the redemption of long oppressed Africa. Often, when contemplating this theme, does my fancy steal away from the apathy and the sad realities of the past, and convey herself onward, a hundred years, in the march of time, to visit this regenerated continent of the slave, as it will then appear to an admiring world. And do you ask, what do I see in this pleasing vision of the future?—I see those moral lights, which our labors are kindling there, brightening, and spreading through those dark habitations of cruelty.—I see one tribe after another coming to the light of Zion, and to the brightness of her rising.—I see Ethiopia awaking from her sleep, looking

forth upon the light, and stretching out her hands to God in praise.—I see long benighted and abused Africa regenerated and peopled by two hundred millions of christianized men. I see the dark and unbroken forests which now stretch over the most fertile continent of the globe, converted into rich plantations, crowned with two abundant harvests in the year, as the reward of voluntary industry. I see towns and cities rising up in peace and beauty, along her ‘ancient rivers’; quiet cottages, and thriving villages scattered over her ‘palmy plains’; churches and schools every where rising into being, dispelling the long night of darkness and superstition, and diffusing their mild influence through those regions which are now the habitations of cruelty. On the plains of the pyramids, I see the relics of those enduring monuments of pride and superstition, converted into temples of the living God, and institutions of learning to bless the land with all that is rich in human science. I see the Muse of poetry and eloquence awaking from her sleep of ages, shaking her slumbers from her brow, and preparing her lyre for strains as sweet as ever flowed from the corded shell of Terrence, her ancient bard. I hear the familiar accents of my mother tongue in all her borders. I see the star spangled banner of my country, waving in all her ports: And, instead of the yell of despair wrung from the agonized heart of the pirate’s victim, I hear the song of praise and the voice of christian worship ascending from the lips of two hundred millions of enlightened, christianized and happy freemen.